

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers September 6, 2006

NETS Feature

Drive Safely Work Week

It's not too late to download **free** materials to promote the 2006 Drive Safely Work Week Campaign to your workforce October 2-6. This year's campaign theme, **Safe Driving is YOUR Responsibility**, promotes and defines 10 positive steps that each driver can take to ensure their safety and the safety of others sharing the road as they drive for work or commute to and from work. Campaign materials were developed for drivers to **Know What to Anticipate.....from YOUR Vehicle, the Roadway and YOURself**. Although the campaign is officially in October, the materials are purposely not dated. Therefore, employers may continue to stress these traffic safety messages and promote safe driving practices within their organization throughout the year. For detailed information please link to: <http://www.trafficsafety.org/dsww.asp>

Michigan Study Finds Younger Truckers Less Likely to Buckle Up

A study conducted by the Wayne State University Transportation Research Group found that younger truckers may buckle up a little less than their older counterparts. 2,644 commercial vehicles in Michigan were observed at 181 locations which included both urban and rural locations. It found that younger truck drivers (under age 29) were "slightly less likely" to wear a seat belt, around 70.6 percent usage, compared with 73.4 percent usage for truckers ages 30 to 59, and 74.1 percent usage for drivers age 60 and older. The study was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

Latest Traffic Safety News

New OSHA QuickCard Highlights Safe Driving Practices

Employees who use motor vehicles for work stand to benefit from a new QuickCard available on OSHA's Web site. Safe Driving Practices for Employees offers tips to ensure employee safety while operating a motor vehicle. This resource is a companion document to Guidelines for Employers to Reduce Motor Vehicle Crashes authored by NETS. Printed copies of the card will be available through OSHA's publications office next month.

Auto Makers To Reduce Whiplash

The auto industry is making progress towards equipping vehicles with active head restraints. More attention is now paid to whiplash since the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety initiated an award and test for whiplash in 2005, bringing more focus to the issue. It's "Top Safety Pick" award is based on combined scores that includes results for the whiplash test. Automakers are compelled redesign seats and headrests to address these tests. More automakers are recognizing the importance of "active head restraints" in preventing spinal/neck injuries and damages resulting from whiplash. New 2006 models from Honda and Mercedes Benz now feature restraint systems. For further information, visit www.iihs.org

Truck Drivers Need More Sleep

University of Pennsylvania researchers found that a significant number of commercial truck drivers have impaired performance due to a lack of sleep. Truck drivers who routinely get too little sleep or

suffer from sleep apnea show signs of fatigue and impaired performance that can make them a hazard on the road. The study is among the largest and most comprehensive studies of truck drivers and fatigue ever done. Allan Pack, PhD, who headed the study team, said the tired truck drivers had impaired performance similar to that of drivers who are legally drunk. The research was funded through a contract from the Trucking Research Institute, American Trucking Associations -- that was funded by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The National Institutes of Health also provided funding. For study results: see the August 15th issue of the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

Ford Testing New 4-Point Seat Belt

Ford Motor Co. is researching the design for a four-point, inflatable seat belt system to improve safety as a possible replacement for the three-point belt that has been an industry standard since 1974. Ford took the idea for the four-point belt, which it has been developing since 2001, from the seat restraints used by race car drivers. That design holds a person more firmly in place. The seat belt looks like a belt and suspenders, and it hooks on like a backpack, with a strap over each shoulder. The changes are still years away from the market, but Ford hopes such technologies will someday increase the use of belts and save more lives.

IIHS Finds Better Vehicles, Not Better Driving, Make the Safety Difference

An Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) study examined data from 1994-2004 finding that driving behavior had not improved in 10 years. Except for vehicle safety improvements like seat belts and air bags, the annual death rate would be higher by 5,000 people. Impaired driving rates remain unchanged, motorists are driving faster and 18% of drivers do not wear seat belts. For further information visit, <http://www.iihs.org>

Traffic Cameras Under Fire In Ohio

Judges, sympathetic state legislators, and angry motorists are rallying to rid Ohio cities of the high-tech cameras that catch drivers who speed and run red lights. A possible vote this fall on a bill in the State Legislature would restrict the use of cameras so that it would not be worth installing them. Cameras are used in about 200 U.S. cities, including eight in Ohio. At least two states, Wisconsin and New Jersey, have banned the cameras, and the National Motorists Association opposes their use, saying intersections could be made safer by lengthening yellow lights and improving lane markings. Camera supporters point to the Federal Highway Administration, which studied the use of red-light cameras at 132 intersections in seven cities for a 2005 report. The cameras reduced front and side crashes by 25 percent. However, the same report noted a 15 percent increase in rear-end crashes.

Sleep Apnea And Sleepiness Raise Risk Of Major Truck Crashes

A new study by Allan L. Pack, MD, PhD, of the University of Pennsylvania indicates that commercial truck drivers with sleep apnea or who get inadequate sleep show signs of impaired performance behind the wheel similar to that of drivers who are legally drunk. The study examined 406 drivers and found that those who regularly slept fewer than five hours a night were sleepier, less attentive, and had diminished reaction times and steering ability. Drivers with severe sleep apnea were also sleepy and had performance impairment. For study results:

Impaired Performance in Commercial Drivers: Role of Sleep Apnea and Short Sleep.

Pack et al. Am. J. Respir. Crit. Care Med. 2006; 174: 446-454

Response Insurance Company Reports Banning Driving Distractions Has Wide Support

According to the recent Response Insurance National Driving Habits Survey 65 percent of Blackberry owners favor banning their use behind the wheel. Other findings revealed that 59 percent of hand-held

cell phone owners support banning their cell phones while driving. The survey also revealed significant support for banning several other activities behind the wheel, including reading (79 percent), text messaging (72 percent), and grooming (68 percent). However, drivers were not as enthusiastic about banning other activities while driving, such as eating (36 percent), smoking (34 percent), and listening to an iPod or MP3 player (28 percent).

SUV Fatality Rate Down 8.7 Percent In 2005--Largest Decline of All Vehicle Types

The SUV Owners of America point out a number of key safety indicators in the latest highway fatality data released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that SUV safety has dramatically improved. The overall occupant fatality rate for SUVs showed the greatest decline of all vehicle types -- down 8.7 percent. SUVs had the largest decline of all vehicle types in occupant fatality. The rate in rollover crashes was down 11 percent. Declines were despite SUVs having the largest increase in registrations -- up 11 percent. For further information, visit <http://www.suvoa.com>

National Truck Driver Appreciation Week 2006

America's 3.24 million drivers received a nationwide pat on the back last week (August 20-26) when they were recognized for their hard work moving the goods and products making up our national economy. Employers were encouraged to show their drivers how much their hard work, commitment and safe driving were appreciated. For further information, <http://www.truckline.com/ntdaw>

Automakers Quick to Hookup iPods

Over 70 percent of 2007 vehicles models will offer jacks and plug-in options for MP3 and iPod connections. Originally, the portable music devices could be hooked up to vehicles by plugging them into a cigarette lighter and using a wireless adapter purchased separately. With the new technology, the units can be plugged directly into the vehicle. According to a recent Harris Interactive Inc. study, called AutoTechCast, most people who own MP3s use their music players while driving. The movement to MP3s in vehicles is akin to the rapid shift to CD players when they became less expensive. For vehicle owners between 25 and 44 the integration rate is 72 percent.

Drowsy Trucker Killed Three In Crash Avoids Jail Time

Alabama truck driver, Robie Joseph Dalrymple was found responsible for taking the lives of three people in a tragic accident last year and convicted of three counts of negligent homicide in a fatigue-related crash will not go to jail. The families of the victims -- three people died and one is paralyzed from the neck down -- pleaded with the court for leniency. They explained to the judge that jail time for Dalrymple would serve no purpose and pointed out that a message had to be sent to truck drivers about drowsy driving. Family members praised public service announcements that warn against drowsy driving. Dalrymple will serve 500 hours of community service in his home state of Alabama.

News from the USDOT

Rise in U.S. Highway Fatality Rate in 2005 Attributed to Motorcycle and Pedestrian Deaths

Last year, traffic deaths in the United States reached their highest levels since 1990 fueled by an increase in motorcycle and pedestrian fatalities. The total number of fatalities rose 1.4 percent from 42,836 in 2004 to 43,443 in 2005 while the rate of fatalities was 1.47 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT), up from 1.45 in 2004. The increase in vehicle fatalities came from the dramatic rise in the number of motorcycle fatalities and increases in the number of pedestrian fatalities over the previous year. Motorcycle fatalities rose 13 percent from 4,028 in 2004 to 4,553 in 2005 and that almost half of the people who died were not wearing a helmet. The number of pedestrian fatalities increased to 4,881 in 2005 from 4,675 in 2004. Other fatality trends improved with the number of

young drivers dying in car crashes declining in 2005 for the third straight year while the number of children who were killed in crashes also declined. The largest drop was for children ages 8-15. The 2005 report can be seen at: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/ncsa/ppt/2006/810639.pdf>

Alcohol-Related Fatalities And Alcohol Involvement Among Drivers And Motorcycle Operators In 2005

The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Center for Statistics and Analysis has released a Traffic Safety Facts Research Note that explores results from the 2005 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) indicating that there were 16,885 alcohol-related fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2005, which the report describes as essentially unchanged from 2004.

New USDOT Rule Issues EDR Standard And Requires Automakers To Tell Consumers When Vehicle Is Equipped With An EDR

NHTSA to issue final regulation for event data recorders (EDRs) in next 30 days. Rule will specify data to be collected, data accessibility, format requirements. However, this new rule will not require automakers to install EDRs if they are not already doing so. Now about 90% of new vehicles have devices. The rule also requires automakers to collect the same type of crash data if they chose to install an EDR, collecting safety information in as many as 23 categories including: vehicle speed, brake status, steering wheel position, occupant positions, and airbag deployment. Automakers will also be required to tell new car buyers if an EDR is installed in their vehicle. The new federal rule, which takes effect starting with model year 2011 cars, will require automakers to note in the owner's manual that the safety monitoring equipment has been installed. The regulation will apply to all passenger vehicles and light trucks with a gross vehicle weight of 8,500 pounds or less. NHTSA will separately evaluate EDR use in larger vehicles. The notice can be seen at: http://nhtsa.gov/staticfiles/DOT/NHTSA/Rulemaking/Rules/Associated%20Files/EDRFinalRule_Aug2006.pdf

Work-Life

Driver Education: The Path Ahead

A new report entitled, "Driver Education: The Path Ahead" has been released by the U.S. Transportation Research Board that includes a series of papers that were presented at a workshop held on September 12-13, 2005, in Washington, D.C. Issues covered in the circular include novice drivers, content of driver education, instructional methods for young drivers, student competency measures, novice driver training effectiveness evaluation, and the future of driver education. Download an electronic copy of the report at: <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/circulars/ec101.pdf>

NSC To Sponsor 2nd Graduated Drivers' Licensing Symposium

The National Safety Council (NSC) announced that it will hold its second international research symposium on graduated drivers' licensing on February 5-6-7, 2007 in Tucson, Ariz. The symposium will feature scientists from around the world who will present research findings that document how GDL laws have affected teens and their incidence of crashes. There will also be sessions devoted to parents and how they impact their teen's driving behavior. The goal of the symposium is to measure the effectiveness of GDL laws and other strategies that address teen driving issues. Following the symposium, the findings will go to state governors, legislators, highway safety leaders and the general public. For further information, visit www.nsc.org

10 Cars Recommended For College Bound Students

CarMax and Driver's Edge teamed up to advise parents on good cars for their college-bound child. Although safety was the primary consideration followed by looks, performance and cost. The cars in

alphabetical order; Audi A4, Ford Five Hundred, Honda Civic, Hyundai Sonata, Scion tC, Subaru Impreza, Toyota Corolla, Volkswagen Jetta, Volkswagen Passat, and the Volvo S40. For further information, visit, www.driversedge.org

Safety Experts Say Kansas Driver's License Age Too Low

"Traffic safety experts say that Kansas is condemning a number of young people to death each year by declaring on their 16th birthday that they can drive anytime, anywhere," according to an article in the Journal-World. Kansas is one of five states that do not have graduated driver's licensing laws that ease the transition between supervised driving and being an independent driver. Kansas has one of the weakest systems in the country. Teen drivers in Kansas account for 6.7 percent of registered drivers and 20.1 percent of all crashes. Legislation to date has not been passed in Kansas because of the rural vote.

All Vehicles To Have Child-Proof Brake-Shift Locks By 2010

Automakers announced a voluntary agreement for installation of systems to prevent vehicles from being shifted out of park unless the brake is depressed. This safety feature will provide extra protection against children causing a vehicle to rollaway. Safety advocates are concerned that the equipment is not mandatory. Over 95 percent of GM vehicles already comply and 90 percent of Fords will comply by mid year 2007.

Communities Target Parents Who Allow Underage Drinking

According to participants at the annual National Leadership Conference in Baltimore, Md., parents in more U.S. communities are facing fines and other penalties for allowing underage youth to drink in their homes. Most of the laws have been passed on the local, rather than state, level and are aimed at punishing parents who look the other way when teenagers drink alcohol in their homes. These laws are gaining momentum across the country with steep fines and bills for police response to focus closer parental attention to the problem. Advocates say a large amount of underage binge drinking occurs in homes where drinking is condoned.

Study: In-Car Cameras Reduce Risky Driving For Teens

Researchers at the University of Iowa, in a study, funded by American Family Insurance Researchers found that in-car cameras reduced risky driving behavior among teenagers. Preliminary results from data collected from the study of 16- and 17-year-old drivers at Clear Creek Amana High School showed risky driving behaviors, such as using a cell phone, traffic violations and taking turns too fast, dropped more than 76 percent. Since March, cameras have been mounted near the rearview mirrors of cars driven by 25 teenagers. One camera records what's happening inside the car. Another camera captures what is happening outside the car. Sudden movements activate the cameras. Researchers hope to use the information to help young people drive more safely. The study focused on rural driving. A study focusing on city driving will be done this fall in Minneapolis. That study will be funded by the Iowa Department of Transportation and by General Motors. The cost for both studies is about \$500,000.

International Traffic Safety News

European Union Strives To Define Common Indicators To Monitor Road Accidents

Currently road accidents are monitored mostly through mortality and injury rates. This study reports the methodology and the results of a project by the European Union and coordinated by the WHO aimed at identifying and evaluating a core set of indicators to monitor the causal chain of road accident health effects. This core set of indicators will allow member states to carry out effective internal/external comparisons over time. Mortality, injury, road accident rate, age of vehicle fleet, and

distance traveled are the indicators recommended for immediate implementation. For study results: Farchi S, Molino N, Giorgi Rossi P, Borgia P, Krzyzanowski, Dalbokova D, Kim R, Working Group ER. BMC Public Health 2006; 6(1): 183.

PIRE Report Says International Trend Is Toward Lower BACs

According to a new study from the Pacific Institute for Research & Evaluation (PIRE), some countries that have BAC limits lower than those in the U.S. have seen reductions in alcohol-related crashes and deaths. The study is in the Journal of Safety Research (vol. 37, issue 3).

Report Of The Road Safety Committee On The Inquiry Into Driver Distraction

The Parliament of Victoria's Road Safety Committee has released a report that examines the role of driver distraction in causing crashes. The report explores the prevalence of mobile telephone use by drivers and its impact on crash causes; the prevalence of in-car video devices, and their effect on drivers and impact on crash causes; and the types of other devices and activities, both inside and outside the vehicle, that may distract a driver's attention from the driving task and lead to unsafe driving. The report also reviews the suitability and enforceability of existing laws concerning the use of mobile telephones and other electronic devices by drivers; and the possible need for change to legislation or statutory requirements to implement any recommendations made as a result of the inquiry. For further information, visit, <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rsc/Distracton/default.htm>